WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of processing an inbound transaction document sent by a trading partner to a user in an electronic commerce system, the method comprising the steps of:-

receiving the inbound document at an interface for communication with trading partners;

routing the inbound document to a mailbox of the user;

automatically determining a set of candidate reply transaction documents associated with the inbound document;

displaying a link to each candidate reply transaction document of said set adjacent to a header of the inbound document in a screen of a mailbox application for the user;

receiving a user selection of a reply transaction document from said candidate set;

parsing the inbound document to determine transaction data relevant to the selected reply document;

automatically populating the selected reply document with said transaction data;

generating a user edit screen displaying the automatically-populated selected transaction reply document, receiving a user input of additional transaction data, and writing said additional data to the reply document; and

transmitting the reply document.

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2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the system determines the set of candidate reply transaction documents by performing a look-up to a database indexed with the inbound document sender and addressee and the inbound document type.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the system determines the set of candidate reply transaction documents by operation of a translation engine:

checking the inbound documents for compliance with a standard model,

sending a negative functional acknowledgement to the trading partner or rejecting the inbound document if the compliance check is negative.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the inbound document is parsed by a translation engine of the system translating the inbound document into a pre-populated selected reply document.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the translation engine writes the pre-populated selected reply document to a set of data structures in memory, and a mail engine of the system creates a pre-populated HTML reply document for rendering within a browser.

6. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the additional data is inputted to the system with use of a tool for appending data to fields.

7. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the additional data is inputted to the system with use of a tool for replacing automatically populated data.

8. An electronic commerce system comprising means for performing a method as claimed in claim 1.

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9. A computer program product comprising software code for performing the steps of claim 1 when executing on a digital computer.

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